

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT December 2007

When my husband Bob and I launched U3A Torrevieja in June 2006, I very reluctantly took the role of Chairman. Although I have enjoyed the secretarial and organizational part of starting this U3A, the recent problems with our tenure at the Asturias Restaurant have taxed my enthusiasm.

Those who joined us for the first time at our meetings in October and November, must have thought we were a very disorganized organization, having the October meeting at the Orihuela Costa Resort and then back to the Asturias only on the first Thursday. We trust this impression will be changed in 2008.

I am sure now we have booked the only free Thursday at the Los Arcos Restaurant and are paying a fee of 50 euros a month, the future should be more secure for our monthly meetings at this venue.

We look forward to a continuing growth in membership and expansion of the opportunities of learning and friendship throughout our interest groups.

LYNDA KISS

TREASURER'S REPORT

On 25th September 2007 a meeting was held of the Committee and Interest Group Leaders to decide on a future financial strategy. It was decided the annual subscription would be 9 euros and that interest group charges would cease from October 2007. The monthly meeting charge would remain at 1 euro per person.

The original intention of the U3A was to register with the Spanish authorities in order to operate a bank account. We were advised that the cost of registration would be in the region of 300-400 euros.

It soon became apparent that whilst membership was expanding, we had insufficient members willing to serve on the Committee who had the necessary residency qualification for registration. Therefore funds which had been built up in the early months to cover these costs would not be needed and we could make changes to our income requirements to meet anticipated expenditure.

Soon after the meeting in September we began to have problems with our monthly booking at the Asturias. We now meet the last Thursday of the month at Los Arcos Restaurant and pay a charge of 50 euros.

This may mean activity groups could be required to re-introduce their 1 euro charge to ensure "the annual expenditure does not result in misery". This will be decided by the new Committee.

We have ended the year with a manageable balance in hand of 292 euros and at the AGM on 31st January 2008 a detailed Income and Expenditure Account will be distributed to members when they renew their subscription of 9 euros for 2008

BOB KISS

2008 U3A COMMITTEE

Nomination papers for a new committee for 2008, were distributed at the October and November meetings. These are the names of those members who were nominated. They met on 29th November to discuss the formation of a committee.

David Evans Lynne Howarth Bob & Jean Cook Maggie Oldfield Mike & Jean Law Jean Wilson Laurie Winstanley
Alan Fawcett Maggie Oldfield Ray Parker

It is appreciated that among those willing to form a committee there are several who are resident in Spain and some who visit regularly, but everyone at some time needs to return to the UK for medical or family reasons and therefore could not always be available to fulfill a specified role in managing the U3A.

However with some positions being covered by a deputy and with the support of a larger committee, David Evans accepted a proposal to be Chairman and Bob Cook the Treasurer.

At the December monthly meeting, these appointments were ratified by the members by a show of hands. The new committee will meet on the 8th February.

MEMBERSHIP

At the beginning of October there were 101 paid up members. During the period October-December, a further 23 people completed membership forms making a total of 124 members.

Attendance at each monthly meeting has averaged between 60-70, including interested newcomers. Our largest attendance was in October when 90 filled the Orihuela Costa Resort bar room.

We hope that our move into Torrevieja at the Los Arcos Restaurant will increase our membership and continue to attract our existing membership.

Membership fees of 9 euros for the year to 31st December 2008 are due at the AGM on Thursday 31st January 2008.

SHEILA HODKINSON

BRIDGE

Numbers have fluctuated during the period October- December 2007, from 4 tables (16 members) to 2 tables (8 members). We have 36 names on our list of players. The Asturias Restaurante continues to allow us to use the north end of the dining room and on occasions, weather permitting, the tented areas outside – all free of charge. We have several experienced players who are only too willing to instruct and encourage new students to the game and very fortunate to have Derek Rush, a retired English Bridge Union tutor, who has provided valuable training to new members and guidance to ‘improvers’.

An occasionally ‘vulnerable’ **BOB KISS**

LUNCH CLUB

The Lunch Club has had an average attendance of 25 over the last few months and everyone seems fairly satisfied with the different restaurants chosen and the menu prices.

In December we had 25 having lunch at Los Arcos after our last monthly meeting at the Asturias. We had a good menu del dia for 8 euros. This was a good turnout as I was not able to advertise our plans to the lunch club regulars until we were actually at the meeting.

There will be a lunch on Wednesday 16th January at 1.15 p.m. at the YU Chinese restaurant in the new Eroski center at Punta Prima. The lunch will be cheap and cheerful at an average cost of 6 euros per person.

(Hot news – 33 members had a Chinese lunch together on the 16th January, a great opportunity to all meet after the holiday, thanks to Jean for contacting everyone).... Editor

The lunch for February will be on the 13th at Christopher’s in Torrevieja. Probably more expensive than usual but highly recommended. Please let me know if you would like to join us and directions will be given.

JEAN LAW Tel:965 319 311

ARCHAEOLOGY SITE VISIT

Saturday morning 3rd November U3A members met in the Civic Centre car park of the village of Dolores de Pacheco. Prof. Michael Walker was our guide for our visit to Sima de las Palomas where Neanderthal remains have been found. The site covers a period from about 130,000 – 35,000 years ago and excavations have been carried out for over a decade.

Several members were disappointed at not being able to go because of other commitments but in actual fact the group of 10 that went were probably just the right number to fit in the cave and be able to hear Prof. Walker and view the exploration platform in the roof. Later those who were more agile were able to scramble up the hillside and enter the chamber from outside and stand on the platform.



Further information can be obtained on the web under Sima de las Palomas, with details of how to become a volunteer student! The Museum of Archaeology in Cartagena covers the same period as the findings at Sima – it is within a short walking distance of El Corte Ingles. Another visit could be arranged for this Autumn if there is sufficient interest.

LYNDA KISS

PAINTING

Although we found an excellent tutor, Maria Moreschi, we were unable to locate a suitable venue big enough to accommodate easels and with sufficient light levels. At present Maria is taking private students at her home and has room for one or two more. Hopefully in the future we will be able to find suitable accommodation to form a painting interest group.

Armchair Travel

We made a good start to the season with our meeting on December 11 2007. We had a DVD and CD viewing of some of the South Sea Islands visited by Jean and Bob during their 2006 World Cruise aboard the Saga Rose. Jean regaled us with the story of her eventful landing on Pitcairn Island. It is a notoriously difficult place to visit (which fact pleased Fletcher Christian and the famous mutineers no end!). Less than 100 passengers had been put ashore when the swell rose very quickly, and the captain announced an immediate return to the ship. Jean was one of the lucky passengers on the first and only tender back, and even that had great difficulty getting alongside the gangway pontoon, damaging both pontoon and tender in the process! The remaining passengers had to be brought back in the islanders' longboat, life-jackets on, and then, one by one, put into a rope harness held by crew members on board, and helped up a rope ladder from the lurching longboat! **Very exciting, and not one of these over-fifty-year-olds went into panic mode!**

Armchair Travel Group Meets:-

2nd Tuesday of the month at 3pm.

Jean and Bob Cook (Contacts)

Tel: 620 705 958



Pitcairn Harbour

Future Events Meetings

Date	Place	Theme
12th Feb	Jean & Bob Cook	New Zealand, Margaret Daniel
11th March	Barbara & Bob Hill Venue, Florentilles	Travels of a Navy Wife Barbara & Bob

HOLISTIC HEALTH

Regular attendance has improved and there were 9 members at the December meeting when I gave a demonstration and talk on the benefits of Tai Chi and Qi Qong.

Those present asked if I would consider holding a U3A class one afternoon a fortnight in this subject in an effort to raise energy levels.

I agreed to start a Qi Qong class on Friday 15th February at 2.30 p.m. at the Rocajuna Bar in Playa Flamenca. It is mainly about gentle movements and deep breathing techniques. The class will take place every fortnight provided folk keep coming.

Holistic Health continues to be on the Second Thursday of the month 10.30 a.m. at the Rocajuna Bar, Playa Flamenca.

MIKE LAW

GENEALOGY GROUP

In November we had an attendance of about 10. Keith Jones shared his experience and gave some useful advice to those who were new to the subject. He subsequently emailed everyone a list of family history web sites.

The December meeting saw myself and Sheila Rolt spending an afternoon on the computer as we were the only two attending!

When I looked at the list I realized almost everyone was back in the UK for the holidays. We are moving our meeting to the 3rd Tuesday and as it is not possible to advertise a meeting in advance for January I decided to skip this and go straight to February.

JEAN LAW

Tel: 965 319 311

PSYCHOLOGY & PHILOSOPHY

It was planned that those who participated in our first year Psychology Group might like to have a look at philosophy, which is best covered in discussion topics. However the three people who wanted to do this and myself decided there were not enough of us to use the debating method and so we have put this on hold for the time being.

A new Psychology Group has started with roughly 6 members but this seems to fluctuate as people come and go either to the UK or to hospital!

The contribution made by members is I think very good and I sincerely hope that all find it beneficial.



In view of the fact that some members would have liked to join the group but are unable to get to the venue so early, it may be possible to change the day and time for next year. We will have to see!

JEAN WILSON Tel: 966 798 196

ART APPRECIATION

Would you like to share with others all you know about your favourite artist?

Be introduced to an artist you know little about. Discuss the merits of Modern Art, Cubism – all periods, schools, visions and techniques. A talk on what you could see at the Prado in Madrid? Have you visited the Prado's new extension, showing 51 of Velazquez's narrative paintings, such as St Joseph's Tunic. Could we have a trip to Madrid?

A discussion on Picasso – have you seen Guernica – can you share your impressions, explain the symbolism?

Can you recommend an art gallery in any of our local cities – Murcia, Cartagena, Alicante. Would you recommend any small galleries containing the work of local artists. Spanish Sculpture – where are the best examples of roundabout sculpture?

Lists available at AGM for those interested in organizing/participating in any of these groups.

MUSIC & THEATRE

On Sunday fourteen members travelled in convoy to the Narcisco Yepes concert hall in Murcia and enjoyed a performance of 'Porgy & Bess' by the New York Harlem theatre group.

Our thanks to Mike & Jean Law who organized the hire of a people carrier and Bob Kiss for going to Murcia to buy the theatre tickets in advance. As has been said before, a theatre trip to Murcia is difficult. Performance times and the journey there and back make for a very late return home and difficult to fit in supper!

We know there are many members who are interested in music and theatre and we will continue to try to keep you informed of events. As we have said before, concerts in smaller venues are not publicized until just beforehand and often not on the net but by flyers in the village concerned.

An exception is Almoradi which runs a series of well-publicised regular Thursday evening chamber concerts. All these concerts are free so no need to book seats. Incidentally, we have been to quite a few chamber music concerts in such venues and we find the standard very high.

DAVID & GRAHAM EVANS

CREATIVE WRITING

We are a group of 6-7 members meeting at my modest bungalow every other Thursday. So far we have tackled rhyming poetry (amazing what talent there is around) a brief piece on childhood memories; we also learn a new 'literary' word each month, and another set piece was a conversation between two women – one 'posh' and one 'common'. Last session we tried writing 50 word stories, example as under:

A Small Dilemma by Jean Wilson The operating theatre echoed with busy feet and the vasectomy patient's courage began fading with each passing moment. "Just a little prick" he heard the nurse say. "It'll be over soon". As she raised the syringe, all aspirations disappeared. He jumped off the trolley, escaped home, intact, to tea and crumpet!

At the last meeting I gave the members an opening paragraph of a story, which they had to complete. Because of shortage of space I am afraid I can't manage any more students but we could start a second group.

JOY LENNICK

LITERATURE GROUPS

We have now grown into two groups. As the book list for the next season was chosen at the end of June, both groups have been reading the same books this season but in future will be organized separately. Details of both groups are on the Schedule of Activities on the back of this newsletter.

My introduction to a Literature Group at the Dorchester U3A was to read 'Cranford' by Mrs. Gaskell. This experience added to my pleasure in watching the recent BBC production. Although 'Cranford' was only one of three of her books used as a source for the stories in the series – perhaps our groups may want to tackle the other two some time?

LYNDA KISS

SPANISH HISTORY

There are several members who have indicated they are very interested in such a group. There will be a list for signatures available at the AGM.

We need a person to volunteer to be a leader/organizer and perhaps offer to host a monthly meeting and we need suggestions of how it could operate.

One idea could be that each member in turn could research a particular historical celebrity, town, event or the group could invite qualified speakers.

For example an expert on the history of local fiestas. **Lets have this group - we need your input.**

COMPUTER TUITION

We have now organized 4 courses in computer skills – Introduction to Word, Introduction to Windows, Getting the most from the Internet, and Desktop Publishing.

Each, a four week course of one hour's tuition by Crystal East, an excellent tutor and at each lesson provides every student with a set of very good notes.

Crystal is willing to arrange courses for groups of 4 students in whatever subject is required and can repeat those already covered.

DVD & VIDEO LIBRARY

Is this something you would like to see?

Let us know – anyone willing to organize such a facility?
